DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 263 713 EC 180 983

TITLE School-Based Support Teams, 1981-82 and 1982-83. E.H.A. Part B Flow-Through Entitlement. O.E.E. Evaluation Report.

INSTITUTION New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn. Office of Educational Assessment.

PUB DATE Mar 84

NOTE 80p.; Prepared by the Special Education Evaluation Unit.

PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Ancillary School Services; Criteria; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Individualized Education Programs; *Mainstreaming; *Student Evaluation; Student Placement; Teamwork

IDENTIFIERS New York (New York); *School Based Support Teams

ABSTRACT

The report documents the 1981-82 and 1982-83 cycles of School-Based Support Team (SBST) services administered by the New York City Public Schools Division of Special Education. SBSTs include school social workers, psychologists, and educational evaluators as core members and are intended to provide consultation and support to regular education teachers and pupils, assess and make recommendations for referred pupils, and provide related services to students in all settings. Four chapters present findings, conclusions and recommendations in the following areas (sample subtopics in parentheses): (1) SBST implementation (activities, staff); (2) evaluation of the program objective of providing timely assessment of all students referred for evaluation (comparison of compliance statistics by school level, district, and region); (3) student movement within and out of special education (least restrictive environment movement and decertification citywide); and (4) individual student data (parent involvement and recommended transfer). Another chapter presents interviews with SBSTs, members of the Committee on the Handicapped, and school staff regarding such aspects as SBST criteria for transfer or decertification and provisions for mainstreaming. The final chapter summarizes conclusions, including marked improvement in the 1982-83 timely assessment objective and substantial variability in decertification and in least restrictive environment movement. Recommendations are made for developing uniform guidelines regarding individual education program reviews, criteria for transfers, and provisions and criteria for mainstreaming. (CL)

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E.H.A. Part B
Flow-Through Entitlement
SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

1981-82 AND 1982-83

OEE Evaluation Report

Office of Educational Evaluation
New York City Public Schools
110 Livingston Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

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O.E.E. EVALUATION REPORT

March, 1984

E.H.A. Part B
Flow-Through Entitlement

SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAMS

1981-82 and 1982-83

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EC180963

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The School-Based Support Teams (S.B.S.T.s), administered by the Division of Special Education (D.S.E.) of the New York City Public Schools and supported, in part, by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Part B (E.H.A., Part B) flow-through funds, were designed to facilitate the delivery of services of the district Committees on the Handicapped (C.O.H.s) and to improve the quality of education for all students. All of the city's schools, representing a combined enrollment of nearly one million students, received S.B.S.T. service. In 1981-82 there were a total of 441 teams and in 1982-83 there were 525.

The S.B.S.T.s carried out a wide range of activities including, but not limited to, conducting formal assessments of students referred for possible special education placement, and reevaluating or reviewing the placements of students already in special education. The teams also provided consultative and support services to pupils and teachers in regular education, and related services to students in special education programs in the mainstream, in resource rooms, in special classes, and in special schools.

For both cycles, the program objective was that, by June 30, 100 percent of the students referred to S.B.S.T.s would receive appropriate and timely evaluation for possible special education placement; timely evaluation was defined as occurring within 30 days. Findings indicated that there was marked improvement in the 1982-83 cycle in the proportion of formal assessments that were completed within the 30-day limit; average proportion in 1981-82 was 66 percent and for 1982-83 it was 94.7 percent. Improvement was most striking in the assessment of elementary, intermediate, and junior high school students; average proportion of cases in compliance increased from 63.9 percent to 94.3 percent. Compliance was already relatively high in 1981-82 for those secondary and Citywide Services students served by the regional teams; average proportion of regional cases in compliance increased from 82.7 percent to 97.6 percent. A number of factors may have contributed to the improvement including, increases in the number of S.B.S.T.s and per-session hours, and a shift in the composition of the formal assessment caseload, away from initial assessments and toward reviews of the placements and services of students already in special education.

In addition to the evaluation of the compliance objective, a number of ancillary analyses were carried out which addressed issues related to the provision of special education services in the least restrictive environment. Findings indicated that once students were placed in special education, very few were transferred. Specifically, for the year ending January 31, 1983, less than two percent of the students from community school-based programs returned to regular grades and about two percent of the students from more restrictive settings transferred to resource rooms. However, there was considerable variability among districts as well as among specific programs. Results of multiple regression analyses suggested that some of the district variability may be explained by overall district student

achievement levels; rates of decertification as well as transfers to resource room from other programs were higher in districts with greater proportions of students reading at or above grade level.

Examination of data for a sample of students whose placements and services were reviewed showed that students recommended for decertification or placement in a less restrictive setting tended to have higher aptitude and achievement levels than those not recommended. Moreover, the data suggested that in making recommendations for placement or continuation in a particular program, S.B.S.T.s and C.O.H.s used a fairly consistent set of criteria, regardless of the direction of the transfer. Specifically, students recommended for decertification had I.Q.s in the normal range and were close to grade level in reading and math; students recommended for resource room placement also had I.Q.s in the normal range but were one to three years below grade level in reading and math; and students recommended for self-contained classes or special school programs had I.Q.s in the borderline or retarded range and were two to five years below grade level.

Finally, interviews with S.B.S.T., C.O.H., and school personnel indicated substantial variability among districts and schools in the number of referrals initiated, criteria for referrals and for recommended transfers, and provisions and guidelines for mainstreaming. Respondents also mentioned a wide range of interdependent factors which they perceived as affecting student transfers and decertification including: district practices; school climate; teacher skills and training; teacher, parent, and student attitudes; and availability of support services in regular education.

A major conclusion of the evaluation was that, in contrast to the compliance statistics, which in 1982-83 were uniformly high for all districts and regions, other results indicated that once students were placed in special education, the likelihood of their being transferred to a less restrictive special education setting, receiving mainstream instruction, or being decertified and returned to regular grades varied markedly.

It was recommended, therefore, that D.S.E., in conjunction with regional and district administrators, explore possibilities for better dissemination and, where necessary, strengthening or establishing uniform guidelines for the following:

- procedures for initiating and performing reviews of Phase I I.E.P.s;
- criteria for transfers within and outside of special education; and
- provisions and criteria for mainstreaming, in both academic and non-academic areas.

Finally, it was recommended that awareness training designed to promote decertifications and movement to less restrictive settings be provided to all regular and special education staff and to special education students and their parents.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In addition to the authors listed on the title page, a number of other people contributed to this evaluation effort. Chief among these were Georgeann DiSomma who coordinated the data processing, and Shelia Moore who was responsible for typing the final document, as well as its several drafts. Field consultants included Irene Buchman, Michael Gershowitz, Ellen Goldsmith, and Joan Schwartz; Diana Feit assisted in the aggregation and analysis of the interview data.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the 1981-82 and 1982-83 cycles of School Based Support Team (S.B.S.T.) services, administered by the Division of Special Education (D.S.E.) of the New York City Public Schools and supported, in part, by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Part B (E.H.A., Part B) flow-through funds. The S.B.S.T.s, core members of which include a school social worker, school psychologist, and educational evaluator, were first established in September, 1980 to facilitate the delivery of services of the district Committees on the Handicapped (C.O.H.s) and to improve the quality of education for all students through: providing consultative and support services to pupils and teachers in regular education; assessing referred students and making recommendations to the C.O.H.s regarding program placement; and providing related services to students in special education programs in the mainstream, in resource rooms, in special classes, and in special schools.

Data which form the basis for this evaluation were collected by the Office of Educational Evaluation (O.E.E.) from monthly district and regional C.O.H. records of S.B.S.T. activities, from D.S.E. Data Bank files of pupil placements, from individual student case records, and from interviews with S.B.S.T. and school personnel. These data were analyzed in order to address the primary objective of providing student assessments, as well as issues related to the provision of special education services in the least restrictive environment. Evaluation questions included the following:

- What level of services did S.B.S.T.s provide?
- How successfully did S.B.S.T.s meet the objective of providing timely assessments?

- To what extent were special education students transferred to less restrictive settings or decertified?
- Was there variability among community school districts in meeting the objective or in recommending transfers within and out of special education? Was there variability among special education programs in transfers of students?
- What circumstances led to different types of transfers within and out of special education?
- What factors did school personnel and S.B.S.T. members see as affecting movement to less restrictive settings or decertification?

Chapters of the report present descriptive and statistical findings, conclusions, recommendations, and areas for further investigation.

II. S.B.S.T. IMPLEMENTATION

Activities

The S.B.S.T.s provided a range of services including consultations with staff, informal and formal assessments of students, conducting educational planning conferences, and providing direct service to students in regular and special education. Team members also maintained student records, compiled statistical reports, prepared testimony on student behavior at suspension hearings, participated in C.O.H. case reviews, and gave presentations at staff training sessions and parent meetings.

The most prevalent S.B.S.T. activity, which was the most comprehensive and which involved all team members, was conducting formal student assessments. Formal assessments were of three types: initial assessments of regular education students for possible special education placement, reviews of students' records to resolve questions concerning the continued appropriateness of placement or services, and mandated triennial reevaluations of all special education students.

For each assessment, the school psychologist administered and interpreted appropriate tests of intellectual and emotional functioning, the school social worker conducted interviews with parents or guardians and the student to obtain social-developmental and family history, and the educational evaluator administered and interpreted criterion- and norm-referenced educational tests. Team members also consulted with teachers and other school staff, observed the student's behavior, and obtained relevant medical, educational, psychological, or social history reports from outside agencies. Finally, the team conducted an educational planning conference (E.P.C.)

attended by parents and other staff to determine the student's individual educational needs.

Following the E.P.C., team members initiated or revised the first phase of the individual education plan (Phase I I.E.P.), made recommendations for service from school staff or outside agencies, recommended placement in a resource room, or requested C.O.H. review when the team or the parents felt that a self-contained special education placement was warranted.

The evaluation objective focussed on formal assessments of students referred to S.B.S.T. However, the teams maintained records of all S.B.S.T. activities and submitted these for district and central aggregation. These additional data, some of which were submitted to the courts in accordance with the Jose P. decision, were made available to O.E.E. for analysis.

Staff

In 1981-82, E.H.A., Part B funds supplemented existing S.B.S.T.s by providing for an administrative community relations officer, 145 school psychologists, 145 social workers, and 146 teachers of special education, 145 of whom served as educational evaluators and one as program coordinator. These staff were assigned individually throughout the city's high schools and 32 community school districts. Program-funded and tax levy-funded staff together made up a total of 441 teams citywide; number of teams was defined by the number of school psychologists. In addition, tax-levy funds provided for 126 thousand per-session hours for school psychologists, school social workers, and educational evaluators.

In 1982-83, program funds supported 52 school psychologists and 145 educational evaluators and provided for a total of 32,192 per-session hours

for supervisors, school psychologists, school social workers, and educational evaluators. Tax-levy funds provided for 202 thousand persession hours. There were a total of 525 teams citywide.

III. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

For both 1981-82 and 1982-83, the program objective was that, by June 30, 100 percent of the students referred to S.B.S.T.s would receive appropriate and timely evaluation for possible special education placement. Timely evaluation was defined as occurring within 30 days from parental consent for formal assessment. Data for the evaluation of the objective were compiled by the Office of Educational Evaluation (O.E.E.) from central C.O.H. records.

Data presented in this chapter address the following evaluation questions:

- How successfully did the S.B.S.T.s meet the annual objective of providing timely assessment of all students referred for evaluation?
- Were there differences between 1981-82 and 1982-83 in the timeliness of assessments? If so, what factors may have contributed to the observed differences?
- Was there variability among school levels or among community school districts in meeting the objective?

Evaluation of Compliance Objective

In order to determine whether all students referred to S.B.S.T.s were evaluated within 30 days, O.E.E. reviewed the records prepared by D.S.E. for submission to the courts in accordance with the Jose P. judicial decision. These monthly records showed the numbers of students awaiting formal assessment according to the following categories: waiting fewer than 30 days, more than 30 days, and more than 60 days. With the exception of the June, 1983 statistics, number of days was counted from the date of signed parental consent for formal assessment; beginning in June, 1983, the Jose P. stipulation required that a case be

considered in process from the date of the initial request for S.B.S.T. assistance.

To determine whether the objective was attained, the proportion of cases in process each month falling within and outside the 30-day limit were computed. These data showed that during 1981-82 the proportion of cases in compliance ranged from a low of 44.8 percent in September, perhaps reflecting a backlog of cases from the summer, to a high of 73 percent. Total number of cases in process during 1981-82 ranged from 4,820 to 9,438 and averaged 8,276 (S.D. = 1,381). The average proportion of cases in compliance for the year was 66.2 percent (S.D. = 7.8 percent); accordingly, the criterion of 100 percent was not attained and the objective was not met. (See Table 1 for a complete presentation of these data.)

In contrast, during 1982-83, excluding June, when the record-keeping procedures changed, the proportion of cases in compliance with the 30-day limit did not fall below 81.2 percent, the September rate, and for five months was above 95 percent. (See Table 2 for a complete presentation of these data.) Total number of cases in process during 1982-83 ranged from 2,197 to 6,701 and, excluding June, averaged 4,733 (S.D. = 1,196). The average proportion of cases in compliance for the year, not including June, was 94.7 percent (S.D. = 5.8 percent). Accordingly, the criterion rate of 100 percent was largely, but not completely, met; however, in comparison with the previous year substantial progress was apparent.

Comparison of Compliance Statistics by School Level

Compliance data were examined separately for the district and regional S.B.S.T.s. Comparison of district compliance statistics for

Table 1

Number and Percentage of All Formal Assessment Cases in Process Each Month during 1981-82 by Length of Time in Process

Month	Time in Process: 30 Days or Less Number	(Percent)	More Than 30 Days Number	(Percent)	Total
September	2,159	(44.8)	2,661	(55.2)	4,820
October	4,945	(67.7)	2,363	(32.3)	7,308
November	5,881	(73.0)	2,183	(27.0)	8,064
December	5,476	(66.6)	2,741	(33.4)	8,217
January	5,874	(66.2)	2,997	(33.8)	8,871
February	6,502	(71.6)	2,581	(28.4)	9,083
March	6,419	(68.0)	3,016	(32.0)	9,435
April	6,357	(67.4)	3,081	(32.6)	9,438
May	5,849	(65.4)	3,093	(34.6)	8,942
June	5,863	(69.1)	2,627	(30.9)	8,590

- The total number of cases in process each month during 1981-82 ranged from 4,820 to 9,438 and averaged 8,276 (S.D. = 1381). The mean percentage of cases in compliance with the 30-day limit was 66 percent (S.D. = 7.8 percent).

Table 2

Number and Percentage of All Formal Assessment Cases in Process each Month during 1982-83 by Length of Time in Process

Month	Time in Process				Total
	30 Days or Less		More Than 30 Days		
	Number	(Percent)	Number	(Percent)	
September	1,784	(81.2)	413	(18.9)	2,197
October	4,256	(96.6)	151	(3.4)	4,407
November	4,722	(98.4)	75	(1.6)	4,797
December	4,270	(98.9)	48	(1.1)	4,318
January	4,605	(99.1)	40	(0.9)	4,645
February	4,800	(98.7)	65	(1.3)	4,865
March	4,646	(91.2)	449	(8.8)	5,095
April	5,197	(93.3)	376	(6.7)	5,573
May	6,344	(94.7)	357	(5.3)	6,701

[a]Compiled according to the previous definition which included only those cases for which parent permission had been obtained. When the June data were compiled according to the Jose P. stipulation, which required that all requests for S.B.S.T. assistance be included, total cases increase to 11,288 with 6,133, or 54.3 percent, in compliance and 5,155, or 45.7 percent, out of compliance with the 30-day limit.

- Excluding June, when the record-keeping procedures changed, the total number of cases in process each month during 1982-83 ranged from 2,197 to 6,701 and averaged 4,733 (S.D. = 1,196.3). The mean percentage of cases in compliance with the 30-day limit was 94.7 percent (S.D. = 5.8 percent).

the two years showed substantial improvement in the assessment of elementary, intermediate, and junior high school students. These data, which are presented in Tables 3 and 4, indicated that, in 1981-82, the average proportion of cases in compliance was 63.9 percent (S.D. = 9.3 percent) and in 1982-83 it was 94.3 percent (S.D. = 6.2 percent). (For comparability, the June data were not included in the annual averages.) Monthly compliance rates ranged from 40.3 to 71.7 percent in 1981-82 and from 79.7 to 99.1 percent in 1982-83.

Compliance rates were also computed for the regional S.B.S.T.s who were responsible for initial assessments and requested reviews of the Phase I I.E.P.s of high school students and for requested Phase I I.E.P. reviews of certain Citywide Services students. These data, which are presented in Tables 5 and 6, indicated that, in 1981-82 the average proportion of cases in compliance was 82.7 percent (S.D. = 5.2 percent), and in 1982-83 it was 97.6 percent (S.D. = 2.9 percent). (Again June data were not included in computation of the annual averages.) Monthly compliance rates ranged from 76.7 percent to 93.4 percent in 1981-82 and from 90.9 percent to 100 percent in 1982-83.

Comparison of Compliance Statistics by District and Region

The improvement in timeliness of assessments of elementary, intermediate, and junior high school students was perhaps most striking at the level of individual community school districts. To investigate variability among districts, annual averages were computed for each district based on the compliance statistics reported for October through May, June data were excluded for comparability between the two program cycles and

Table 3

Number and Percentage of Elementary, Intermediate, and Junior High School Formal Assessment Cases in Process Each Month during 1981-82, by Length of Time in Process

Month	Time in Process				Total
	30 Days or Less		More Than 30 Days		
	Number	(Percent)	Number	(Percent)	
September	1,779	(40.3)	2,634	(59.7)	4,413
October	4,413	(66.3)	2,240	(33.7)	6,653
November	5,129	(71.7)	2,020	(28.3)	7,149
December	4,833	(65.5)	2,551	(34.5)	7,384
January	5,220	(65.1)	2,798	(34.9)	8,018
February	5,825	(70.8)	2,397	(29.2)	8,222
March	5,668	(66.4)	2,870	(33.6)	8,538
April	5,687	(65.7)	2,966	(34.3)	8,653
May	5,211	(63.6)	2,985	(36.4)	8,196
June	5,717	(68.7)	2,603	(31.3)	8,320

- Excluding June, for comparability with the 1982-83 data, the percentage of elementary, intermediate, and junior high school cases in compliance with the 30-day limit during 1981-82 ranged from 40.3 to 71.7 percent and averaged 63.9 percent (S.D. = 9.3 percent).

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Elementary, Intermediate, and Junior High School Formal Assessment Cases in Process Each Month during 1982-83, by Length of Time in Process and Month

Month	Time in Process				Total
	30 Days or Less		More Than 30 Days		
	Number	(Percent)	Number	(Percent)	
September	1,602	(79.7)	408	(20.3)	2,010
October	3,626	(96.0)	151	(4.0)	3,777
November	4,100	(98.2)	75	(1.8)	4,175
December	3,780	(98.9)	39	(1.1)	3,819
January	4,135	(99.1)	36	(0.9)	4,171
February	4,227	(98.5)	65	(1.5)	4,292
March	4,165	(91.2)	401	(8.8)	4,566
April	4,644	(92.9)	353	(7.1)	4,997
May	5,283	(94.1)	328	(5.9)	5,611
June	5,961	(54.5)	4,967	(45.4)	10,928

- Excluding June, when the record-keeping procedures changed, the percentage of elementary, intermediate, and junior high school cases in compliance with the 30-day limit during 1982-83 ranged from 79.7 to 99.1 percent and averaged 94.3 percent (S.D. = 6.2 percent).

Table 5

Number and Percentage of Regional[a] Formal Assessment Cases in Process Each Month during 1981-82, by Length of Time in Process

Month	Time in Process				Total
	30 Days or Less		More Than 30 Days		
	Number	(Percent)	Number	(Percent)	
September	380	(93.4)	27	(6.6)	407
October	532	(81.2)	123	(18.8)	655
November	752	(82.2)	163	(17.8)	915
December	643	(77.2)	190	(22.8)	833
January	654	(76.7)	199	(23.3)	853
February	677	(78.6)	184	(21.4)	861
March	751	(83.7)	146	(16.3)	897
April	670	(85.4)	115	(14.6)	785
May	638	(85.5)	108	(14.5)	746
June	146	(85.9)	24	(14.1)	170

[a]Regional S.B.S.T.s were responsible for initial assessment and requested reviews of Phase I.E.P.s of high school students and for requested reviews of the Phase I I.E.P.s of certain Citywide Services students.

- Excluding June, for comparability with the 1982-83 data, the percentage of regional cases in compliance with 30-day limit during 1981-82 ranged from 76.7 to 93.4 percent and averaged 82.7 percent (S.D. = 5.2 percent).

Table 6

Number and Percentage of Regional[a] Formal Assessment Cases in Process Each Month during 1982-83, by Length of Time in Process

Month	Time in Process				Total
	30 Days or Less		More Than 30 Days		
	Number	(Percent)	Number	(Percent)	
September	182	(97.0)	5	(3.0)	187
October	630	(100.0)	--	--	630
November	622	(100.0)	--	--	622
December	490	(98.2)	9	(1.8)	499
January	470	(99.2)	4	(0.8)	474
February	573	(100.0)	--	--	573
March	481	(90.9)	48	(9.1)	529
April	553	(96.0)	23	(4.0)	576
May	1,061	(97.3)	29	(2.7)	1,090
June	172	(47.8)	188	(52.2)	360

[a]Regional S.B.S.T.s were responsible for initial assessment and requested reviews of Phase I I.E.P.s of high school students and for reviews of the Phase I I.E.P.s of certain Citywide Services students.

- Excluding June, when the record-keeping procedures changed, the percentage of regional cases in compliance with the 30-day limit during 1982-83 ranged from 90.9 to 100 percent and averaged 97.6 percent (S.D. = 2.9 percent).

Table 7

Mean Annual Percentage of Elementary, Intermediate, and Junior High School Cases in Process for 30 Days or Less, by Community School District and Program Year

District	Year 1981-1982	Year 1982-1983
1	85.3	94.1
2	60.9	93.3
3	75.5	92.2
4	65.4	98.4
5	55.1	90.4
6	31.4	94.3
7	56.9	98.8
8	59.1	95.1
9	39.5	97.0
10	42.0	95.7
11	66.9	98.0
12	44.3	93.3
13	65.5	94.2
14	88.3	91.4
15	87.2	97.9
16	100.0	100.0
17	87.1	96.4
18	71.5	94.9
19	68.1	99.7
20	74.8	97.6
21	57.3	96.3
22	82.0	92.1
23	83.1	97.9
24	73.1	98.4
25	92.5	97.7
26	88.3	100.0
27	71.4	99.1
28	75.5	97.4
29	88.1	95.2
30	58.6	94.0
31	68.3	97.0
32	68.4	99.6
Mean (S.D.)	69.7 (16.5)	96.2 (2.6)

- In 1981-82, annual district averages of the percentages of cases in compliance ranged from 31.4 to 100 percent. In contrast, in 1982-83, all annual averages were over 90 percent.

September data were excluded because many districts did not have their full complement of teams at the beginning of the school year. District data for the two program cycles, which are presented in Table 7, showed that average annual compliance rates in 1981-82 ranged from a low of 31.4 percent for District 6 to a high of 100 percent for District 16; mean compliance rate across all districts was 69.7 percent (S.D. = 16.5 percent). In 1982-83, in contrast, the annual district averages were all above 90 percent and the mean compliance rate for all districts was 96.2 percent (S.D. = 2.6 percent).

Improvement in completion of regional assessments was also apparent. Annual averages for each region, from October through May, are presented in Table 8. In 1981-82 average compliance rates ranged from a low of 71.5 percent to a high of 89.4 percent; mean rate was 80.4 percent (S.D. = 6.0 percent). In 1982-83 average rates ranged from 93.5 percent to 99.8 percent; mean rate was 97.6 percent (S.D. = 2.5 percent).

Supplementary Data

In order to further explore the changes in compliance rate and to place these data in the context of other S.B.S.T. activities, certain additional program records were examined. The purpose of the supplementary analyses was to see whether there were factors beyond the increased number of teams and per-session hours which may have contributed to improved compliance. The following questions were addressed:

- Did the improved compliance statistics and overall reduction in the number of cases in process reflect a decrease in the number of requests for formal assessment?
- Were the improved compliance statistics associated with a reduction in other S.B.S.T. services such as counseling?

Table 8

Mean Annual Percentage of Regional[a] Cases in Process For 30 Days or Less, by Region and Program Year

Region	Year 1981-82	Year 1982-83
1. Manhattan	83.4	97.2
2. Bronx	79.6	99.8
3. Brooklyn West	71.5	93.5
4. Brooklyn East	80.8	96.1
5. Queens	89.4	99.4
6. Richmond	77.4	99.4
Mean (S.D.)	80.4 (6.0)	97.6 (2.5)

[a]Regional S.B.S.T.s were responsible for initial assessments and requested reviews of Phase I. I.E.P.s of high school students and for requested review of the Phase I I.E.P.s of certain Citywide Services students.

- In 1981-82, annual regional averages of the percentage of cases in compliance ranged from 71.5 to 89.4 percent. In 1982-83, average percentages were all above 90 percent.

In order to investigate the relationship between compliance statistics and requests for formal assessment, monthly city-wide records were examined for the two program cycles. Data consisted of combined S.B.S.T. and C.O.H. records which indicated for each month the number of requests for initial assessments of students in regular education and the number of referrals for review of the Phase I I.E.P.s of students currently in special education. These data, which are presented in Table 9, indicated that requests for initial assessments, for which signed parent consent was obtained, decreased from 32,866 in 1981-82 to a total of 30,204 in 1982-83. At the same time, referrals of students currently in special education programs increased substantially, from a total 18,253 in 1981-82 to a total of 24,322 in 1982-83. Thus, it would not appear that the marked improvement in compliance rates is attributable to a decrease in numbers of students referred for assessment.

However, the composition of the formal assessment caseload may have contributed to improved compliance; many more of the students for whom formal assessments were requested in 1982-83 were students already in special education. In 1981-82 about 36 percent of the requests for formal assessments were from special education, compared to 45 percent in 1982-83. The implication of this shift in the composition of the caseload was suggested by certain interview data which are presented in Chapter VII. When asked whether or not they administered a full battery of tests when reviewing a student's placement and services, members of 16 of the 20 S.B.S.T.s interviewed indicated that they did not find it necessary to do so. Accordingly, such reviews of the Phase I I.E.P. probably take much less time for the teams to complete, which in turn

Table 9

Requests for Formal Assessment of Regular and Special Education Students Received by All S.B.S.T.s and C.O.H.s, by Month and School Year

Month	Regular Education		Special Education	
	1981-82	1982-83	1981-82	1982-83
September	1,336	1,536	755	1,445
October	3,277	3,198	1,596	2,156
November	3,361	3,188	1,399	1,930
December	3,156	2,568	1,403	1,482
January	3,194	3,367	1,329	1,842
February	3,540	2,743	1,382	1,801
March	4,296	3,309	2,324	2,626
April	2,607	3,570	2,146	3,574
May	3,451	3,810	2,673	4,218
June[a]	4,648	2,915	3,246	3,248
Total	32,866	30,204	18,253	24,322

[a]Data were compiled according to the previous definition, in which the monthly and annual totals included only those cases for which parent permission for formal assessment had been obtained. When the June, 1983 data were compiled according to the court-ordered Jose P. stipulation which required that all requests for S.B.S.T. assistance be included, total referrals from regular education increase to 9,152 for an annual total of 36,441; referrals from special education increase to 4,422 for a total of 25,496.

- The number of regular education students referred for formal assessment in 1982-83 decreased by 8.1 percent, from 32,866 to 30,204. In contrast, the number of special education students referred for review of the Phase I I.E.P. increased by 33.2 percent, from 18,253 to 24,322.

would increase the likelihood of these cases being in compliance with the 30-day limit.

In order to investigate the relationship between compliance statistics and other S.B.S.T. services, appropriate program records were examined for the two cycles. One statistic which was comparable for both years was the number of special education students receiving related educational support services, such as counseling, each month. These data, which are presented in Table 10, indicated that, for nine out of ten months, more students during the 1982-83 cycle were receiving related services than during the 1981-82 cycle. Annual monthly average for 1981-82 was 6,625 students (S.D. = 1,615) and for 1982-83 it was 7,148 students (S.D. = 1,223). Accordingly, increased compliance cannot be attributed to decline in related services.

Summary

In conclusion, the S.B.S.T.s were much more effective in 1982-83 than in 1981-82 in providing timely assessments of students; the average proportion of cases in compliance increased to nearly 100 percent in every district as well as overall. At the same time, the average number of students receiving related services increased from 1981-82 to 1982-83. In addition, the number of students for whom formal assessments were requested increased; however, a greater proportion of these were referrals for reviews of the Phase I I.E.P.s of students already in special education which, according to interviews with S.B.S.T.s, did not require a full battery of tests and therefore were probably easier to complete within the 30-day limit.

Table 10

Number of Students Receiving Related Services
from S.B.S.T.s, by Month and School Year

Month	Year 1981-1982	1982-1983
September	2,505	3,790
October	5,193	6,848
November	6,780	7,271
December	7,051	7,407
January	7,392	7,743
February	7,212	7,936
March	7,516	7,609
April	7,689	7,460
May	7,419	7,480
June	7,491	7,935
Mean (S.D.)	6,625 (1,615)	7,148 (1,223)

- Average number of students receiving related services from S.B.S.T.s increased from 6,625 in 1981-82 to 7,148 in 1982-83, an increase of approximately eight percent.

The primary contributor to improved compliance appears to have been the increased number of teams and per-session hours during 1982-83.

IV. STUDENT MOVEMENT WITHIN AND OUT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Official documents of the New York State Education Department, as well as those of the Division of Special Education (D.S.E.), state clearly that placement of a student in a special education program is subject to review at any time, and to mandated periodic reevaluation. One purpose of such reviews is to help ensure that special education is provided in the least restrictive setting, with a final goal of decertification, or the return of students to regular grades. Mandated triennial reevaluations and requested reviews were among the responsibilities of the S.B.S.T.s.

The theoretical framework for conceptualization of movement within and out of special education, which is cited in the D.S.E. Handbook for Special Education Supervisors (October, 1982), is the "Cascade System of Special Education Service." Special education services are described as comprising a hierarchy of restrictiveness and, thus, according to a policy of least restrictive placement, students receive service in a program that is no further down the hierarchy than necessary and, moreover, return up the hierarchy of services as rapidly as possible.

The present chapter addresses the following questions:

- What was the extent of movement of special education students to less restrictive environments (L.R.E.) and to regular grades?
- How much variability was there among programs and among community school districts in movement of special education students?
- What district-level factors were associated with L.R.E. movement and decertification?

Methodology

In order to determine the nature and extent of L.R.E. movement and decertification, the D.S.E. programs were first classified according to the Cascade System. The major categories and programs, presented in Table 11 in the order of restrictiveness, were as follows: Level 1, regular class with related services; Level 2, regular class plus resource room; Level 3, in general, self-contained class in community school; Level 4, in general, special school, residential treatment center, or home instruction.

Several types of L.R.E. movement were defined for investigation: movement from special schools to self-contained classes, movement from either of these to resource rooms, and return to regular grades with special education related services. Decertification was defined as a return to regular grades without any special education related services.

L.R.E. Movement and Decertification Citywide

In order to determine the extent of L.R.E. movement and decertification, aggregate student data provided by the D.S.E. Databank were examined which showed the placements of all students transferred within special education and decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983. These data, which are presented in Table 12, showed that overall, there was not a great deal of either type of movement. Using as a baseline the total special education population as of November 30, 1982, which was approximately 103 thousand students, 3.9 percent or 4,037 were decertified, i.e., returned to regular grades without special education related services. However, 2,416 of these were students from programs which provided short-term care, e.g.

Table 11

Classification of Selected[a] D.S.E. Programs by Level of Restrictiveness

Level 1

44.[b] Regular Class plus Related Services--Vision
58. Regular Class plus Related Services--Hearing
63. Regular Class plus Related Services--Speech

Level 2

43. Vision Resource Room
56. Hearing Resource Room
61, 62. Speech Center
85. Generic Resource Room

Level 3

3. Educable Mentally Retarded
4. Trainable Mentally Retarded
9. Occupational Training Center: Educable Mentally Retarded
10. Occupational Training Center: Trainable Mentally Retarded
16. Health Conservation 10: Health Impaired
17. Health Conservation 20: Orthopedically Handicapped
18. Health Conservation 30: Learning Disabled
26. Emotionally Handicapped
53. Speech, Language, and Hearing Impaired Children
71. Neurologically Impaired and Emotionally Handicapped
80. Learning Center II
81. Readiness

Level 4

5. Multiply Handicapped/Mentally Retarded
8. Track IV
19,20,21. Home Instruction
22. Career Development
29. Teacher-Moms
30. Autistic
31. Day School
32. Residential Treatment
33. Day Treatment
37. Psychiatric Hospitalization
82. Center for Multiply Handicapped

[a]Programs with few students transferring in or out were not included.

[b]D.S.E. program codes.

instruction at home for students with fractures, or instruction during a medical or psychiatric hospitalization. When home instruction and hospital programs are excluded from the analysis, the number of students decertified decreases to 1,621 out of 101 thousand or 1.6 percent. Of the nearly 73 thousand students in self-contained classes or special schools, 1,260 or 1.7 percent were transferred to resource rooms or speech centers. An additional 188 students returned to regular grades with related special education services.

Variability among Selected Special Education Programs

Decertifications. In order to further explore these findings, rates of decertification were calculated for students from a number of the higher-incidence school-based programs, i.e. those serving more than 1,000 students. These data, which are presented in Table 12, showed the following numbers and percentages of students returning to regular grades without special education related services. Students who were most often decertified were those in regular grades receiving itinerant speech services, 225 out of 2,836 or 7.9 percent; those in generic resource rooms, 849 out of 25,690 or 3.3 percent; students from the Day School program for pupils with severe behavior disorders, 22 out of 1,468 or 1.5 percent; and students from classes for the emotionally handicapped, 130 out of 10,700 or 1.2 percent. Of students from self-contained classes for learning disabled, educable mentally retarded, or neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students, fewer than one percent were decertified. Also, fewer than one percent from the Teacher-Moms program for students with severe emotional problems, the Day Treatment program for students with severe behavior

Table 12

Number and Percentage[a] of Students Transferred to Less Restrictive Environments and Decertified from Selected Special Education Programs and Citywide

Program	N[b]	Transferred to: Level 3: Self-Contained Class[c] Number (Percent[a])	Level 2: Resource Rooms[c] Number (Percent[a])	Regular Grades Without Related Services Number (Percent[a])
Itinerant Speech Services	2,836	---	---	225 (7.9)
Generic Resource Room	25,690	---	---	849 (3.3)
Self-Contained Classes				
Learning Disabled	25,282	---	520 (2.1)	99 (0.4)
Emotionally Handicapped	10,700	---	370 (3.5)	130 (1.2)
Neurologically Impaired and Emotionally Handicapped	5,146	---	59 (1.1)	11 (0.2)
Educable Retarded	4,719	---	16 (0.3)	11 (0.2)
Special Schools[d]				
Day Treatment	1,594	72 (4.5)	10 (0.6)	9 (0.6)
Teacher-Moms	1,555	111 (7.1)	7 (0.5)	2 (0.1)
Day School	1,468	108 (7.4)	10 (0.7)	22 (1.5)
Track IV	981	36 (3.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Citywide	103,325	Not computed	1,260 (1.7)	4,037[e] (3.9)

[a]Number of students transferred between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983 and as a percentage of total program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[c]Includes certain other programs as per Table 11.

[d]The Day Treatment program served students with severe behavior and communication disorders, the Teacher-Moms program served young children with severe emotional problems, the Day School program was for students with severe behavior disorders, and the Track IV program served severely or profoundly retarded students.

[e]Of these, 2,416 were decertified from Citywide Services programs providing short-term instruction to home-bound or hospitalized students. Also, 188 students returned to regular grades with related services.

and communication disorders, and the Track IV program for severely or profoundly mentally retarded students were decertified.

L.R.E. Transfers Within Special Education. Percentages of students moving to resource room programs or speech centers from self-contained classes were as follows: from classes for emotionally handicapped students, 3.5 percent; from classes for learning disabled students, 2.1 percent; and from classes for neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students, 1.1 percent. Fewer than one percent of educable mentally retarded students or those served in the four special school programs surveyed moved to resource rooms or speech centers. However, there were a fair number of transfers from special school programs to self-contained classes, as follows: from the Day School program, 7.4 percent; from the Teacher-Moms program, 7.1 percent; from the Day Treatment program, 4.5 percent; and from the Track IV program, 3.7 percent. (See Table 12.)

Variability Among Community School Districts

To determine the extent of variability among community school districts (C.S.D.) in the movement of students to less restrictive special education settings and to regular grades without related services, district data for five high-incidence school-based programs were examined. Programs included itinerant speech services, generic resource room, H.C. 30 classes for learning disabled students, classes for emotionally handicapped students, and classes for neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students. For each program, the number of students who were transferred to generic resource rooms or decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983 was

noted, and the percentage of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982 was computed.

Decertifications. Comparisons among districts of numbers and percentages of students who were decertified showed substantial variation for each of the five target programs. For example, proportions of students decertified from itinerant speech services ranged from a low of zero to a high of 33.2 percent and in eight of the 32 districts exceeded the citywide rate of 7.9 percent. Similarly, the rates for decertification of resource room students ranged from 0.2 percent to 9.3 percent; nine districts exceeded the citywide rate of 3.2 percent. The rates for decertification from the three self-contained class programs showed much less variability: emotionally handicapped students, zero to 4.3 percent; neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students, zero to 1.6 percent; and learning disabled students, zero to one percent. (For a complete presentation of these data, see the Appendix.)

When numbers of students decertified from all five target programs were combined, the district rates ranged from 0.5 to 5.7 percent. These data, which are presented in Table 13, indicated that the districts with the five highest rates were C.S.D.s 31, 29, 24, 26, and 18 and those with the five lowest rates were C.S.D.s 7, 8, 12, 15, and 16. From all 32 districts, 1,123 out of 56,049 students or 2.0 percent, returned to regular grades from the selected programs. (See Table 13.)

L.R.E. Transfers Within Special Education. Transfers from self-contained classes to generic resource rooms showed less variability across districts.

Table 13

Number and Percentage[a] of Students
Decertified from Selected Special Education Programs
in Each Community School District

District	N[b]	Number of Students	(Percent[a])	Rank Order
1	1,430	13	(0.9)	24
2	1,794	50	(2.8)	7
3	1,498	22	(1.5)	16.5
4	1,390	26	(1.9)	11
5	1,056	15	(1.4)	19
6	791	11	(1.4)	19
7	1,415	6	(0.4)	30
8	1,934	12	(0.6)	28.5
9	1,532	10	(0.7)	26.5
10	1,880	15	(0.8)	25
11	2,179	30	(1.4)	19
12	1,380	8	(0.6)	28.5
13	1,504	15	(1.0)	22.5
14	1,268	21	(1.7)	14
15	2,082	10	(0.5)	31.5
16	1,249	6	(0.5)	31.5
17	1,334	25	(1.9)	11
18	1,543	51	(3.3)	5
19	2,020	24	(1.2)	21
20	2,082	37	(1.8)	13
21	2,204	22	(1.0)	22.5
22	2,557	53	(2.1)	8.5
23	1,178	8	(0.7)	26.5
24	1,830	65	(3.6)	3.5
25	2,308	72	(3.1)	6
26	1,974	71	(3.6)	3.5
27	2,581	42	(1.6)	15
28	2,051	39	(1.9)	11
29	1,790	97	(5.4)	2
30	1,576	33	(2.1)	8.5
31	3,459	196	(5.7)	1
32	1,180	18	(1.5)	16.5
Total	56,049	1,123	(2.0)	

[a]Number of students decertified from itinerant speech services, resource rooms, and self-contained classes for learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, and neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students from January 31, 1982 to January 31, 1983 and as a percent of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Total enrollment for the five programs as of November 30, 1982.

Proportions of students transferred from classes for emotionally handicapped to resource rooms ranged from zero to seven percent, proportions transferred from classes for learning disabled ranged from 0.1 percent to 4.5 percent, and proportions transferred from classes for neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped ranged from zero to 4.6 percent. (For a complete presentation of these data, see the Appendix.)

When numbers of students transferred to resource rooms from the three self-contained target programs were combined, district rates ranged from 0.3 to 3.8 percent. These data, which are presented in Table 14, indicated that the districts with the five highest rates of tranfers to resource rooms were C.S.D.s 31, 18, 29, 20, and 1 and those with the five lowest rates were C.S.D.s 5, 12, 7, 9, and 23. From all 32 districts, 690 out of 30,379 or 2.3 percent of the students in classes for learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, or neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students were transferred to resource rooms. (See Table 14.)

Factors Affecting L.R.E. Movement and Decertification

To determine the extent to which district demographics and certain S.B.S.T. and C.O.H. variables were associated with the number of students from selected self-contained classes who were transferred to resource rooms, a multiple regression analysis was performed; a similar analysis was performed for decertifications. The dependent variable for the first regression was the total number of students transferred to resource rooms from self-contained classes for learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, or neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students in each district; for the

Table 14

Number and Percentage[a] of Students Transferred to Less Restrictive Environments from Selected Special Education Programs for each Community School District

District	N[b]	Number of Students (Percent[a])		Rank Order
1	752	25	(3.3)	5
2	767	17	(2.2)	18
3	839	17	(2.0)	20
4	805	14	(1.7)	23.5
5	706	9	(1.3)	28
6	399	10	(2.5)	13
7	938	10	(1.1)	30
8	1,181	21	(1.8)	22
9	1,141	5	(0.4)	31
10	838	20	(2.4)	14.5
11	1,204	23	(1.9)	21
12	1,015	12	(1.2)	29
13	950	13	(1.4)	27
14	813	13	(1.6)	25
15	1,100	16	(1.5)	26
16	816	14	(1.7)	23.5
17	780	19	(2.4)	14.5
18	765	29	(3.8)	1.5
19	1,262	34	(2.7)	10.5
20	1,009	35	(3.5)	3.5
21	1,355	38	(2.8)	9
22	1,238	39	(3.2)	6
23	748	2	(0.3)	32
24	709	16	(2.3)	16
25	1,092	34	(3.1)	7
26	917	25	(2.7)	10.5
27	1,323	34	(2.6)	12
28	1,049	23	(2.2)	18
29	799	28	(3.5)	3.5
30	903	26	(2.9)	8
31	1,338	51	(3.8)	1.5
32	828	18	(2.2)	18
Total	30,379	690	(2.3)	

[a]Number of students transferred to resource rooms from self-contained classes for learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, and neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students from January 31, 1982 to January 31, 1983 and as a percent of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Total enrollment for the three programs as of November 30, 1982.

second, it was the total number of students decertified from the same three self-contained classes plus resource room and itinerant speech services. To control for variation among districts in size of special education enrollment, this variable was entered on the first step. Predictor variables, which included average number of requests for formal assessment from regular and special education per S.B.S.T., average number of triennials completed per S.B.S.T., proportion of all district students reading at or above grade level, average percentage attendance, and average number of E.P.C.s completed per week per S.B.S.T., were then entered in stepwise fashion. That is, the variable explaining the largest percentage of variance in transfers to resource room, beyond that explained by special education enrollment, was entered into the regression equation. Next, the variable explaining the largest percentage of variance beyond that already explained by these two was entered, and so on.

The results, which are presented in Table 15, showed that only the proportion of students reading at or above grade level significantly increased the percentage of explained variance beyond that already explained by size of special education enrollment; this was true for transfers to resource room ($\underline{R}^2_{increase}$ = 8 percent; F = 23.7; $p < .01$) as well as decertification ($\underline{R}^2_{increase}$ = 18 percent; F = 21.7; $p < .01$). Special education enrollment and proportion of students reading on level together accounted for 62 percent of the variance in transfers to resource room and 60 percent of the variance in decertifications. No other variables accounted for a statistically significant increase in explained variance of either dependent

Table 15

Multiple Regression Analysis of District Descriptors on Transfers to Resource Room and Decertification from Selected Special Education Programs[a]

Variable	R	R^2	$R^2_{increase}$	F
		On Transfers to Resource Room		
Enrollment[b]	.74	.54	--	35.4***
Reading Level[c]	.72	.62	.08	23.7***
		On Decertifications		
Enrollment[b]	.65	.42	--	21.7***
Reading Level[c]	.76	.60	.18	21.7***

[a]Transfers to resource rooms from self-contained classes for learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, and neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped students. Decertifications from these three plus resource room and intinerant speech services.

[b]Total special education enrollment.

[c]Percentage of students reading at or above grade level.

- For both transfers to resource rooms and decertifications, only the proportion of students reading at or above grade level significantly increased the percentage of explained variance beyond that already explained by the size of the special education enrollment.

variable. The partial correlations between L.R.E. transfers and decertifications, on the one hand, and proportion of students reading at or above grade level, controlling for size of special education enrollment, were .41 and .56, respectively. Thus, the larger the proportion of students reading on grade level, the greater the numbers who were transferred to less restrictive settings or decertified.

Related Findings

The substantial degree to which transfers of special education students could be predicted from the overall district reading level parallels a finding of the 1980 O.E.E. evaluation of Project REP (Referral Evaluation and Placement). In that evaluation, there was an attempt to identify demographic descriptors which would differentiate between schools initiating greater as opposed to fewer numbers of referrals of students for possible special education placement. Among the significant differences that were found between high- and low-referring schools were the following: high-referring schools had fewer students reading two or more years below grade level, lower building utilization, and lower average daily register. The authors speculated that:

> the results of this investigation point toward a type of figure-ground factor as underlying the observed relationships between the characteristics of schools and their referral rates to C.O.H. That is, the more that a student encountering problems in school stands out against the background of the school environment the greater is the probability of referral to C.O.H. Problem students in large-register schools with high population densities -- percentages of utilization -- and low-achievement statistics may fade into the background and escape identification. On the other hand, students encountering difficulties in low-

> register, underutilized schools with relatively high achievement statistics stand out in contrast to the environment and are more readily identified. (p. 36).

Although these were school-level data and the present data are district level, one may speculate that a similar set of circumstances were operating to facilitate L.R.E. movement and decertification. That is, in those districts in which reading level, and presumably other measures of academic functioning, are high, students with handicapping conditions are noticed, referred, and placed more readily. If their deficits are also mild, they can be overcome more quickly, thus setting the stage for transfer to a less restrictive placement or decertification. Again, in the absence of other data, this is only speculation. Future studies will attempt to determine the underlying causes for the observed association between reading achievement and other demographic descriptors and movement of students into, within, and out of special education.

V. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT DATA

In order to explore the individual student characteristics associated with different types of student transfers within and out of special education, a small pilot study was conducted in four community school districts. O.E.E. examined S.B.S.T. and C.O.H. records of approximately 300 students whose special education placements were reviewed during Spring, 1983 and compiled information which included level of academic functioning, current and recommended placement, and degree of parent involvement.

It must be noted that the sample of cases was not systematically drawn and neither the cases nor the districts from which they came are being presented as representative. Accordingly, the findings must be seen primarily as background for a more intensive and systematic study.

Using the hierarchy of D.S.E. programs which was presented in Table 11, each case was classified according to the type of transfer which was recommended following S.B.S.T. or C.O.H. review. These were as follows:

- decertification, or return to regular grades without related services;
- movement to a less restrictive placement within special education, including transfer from a special school to a self-contained class or from either of these to a resource room;
- no movement, including remaining in the same program or at the same level of restrictiveness; and
- movement to a more restrictive placement within special education, including transfer from a resource room to a self-contained class or from either of these to a special school program.

Data are presented which address the following questions:

- What were the distributions of recommendations that resulted from reviews of Phase I I.E.P.s and from triennial reevaluations?
- For each type of recommendation, what was the likelihood that it was the outcome of a Phase I I.E.P. review or a triennial reevaluation?
- What was the relationship between parent involvement and type of recommended transfer?
- What individual student characteristics were associated with each type of recommended transfer?

Type of Evaluation and Recommended Transfer

To determine whether there was any relationship between type of evaluation, i.e., a requested review of the Phase I I.E.P. or a triennial reevaluation, and outcome, a cross-tabulation was prepared of type of evaluation by recommendation. These data, which are presented in Table 16, were first examined to determine the distribution of recommendations that followed from each type of evaluation. Results indicated that the most frequent outcome for both was recommendation for placement at the same level of restrictiveness, although this was somewhat more the case for triennials (52.9 percent) than Phase I I.E.P. reviews (39.3 percent). Both types of evaluation were about equally likely to lead to a recommendation for decertification (24.3 percent of triennials and 21.3 percent of Phase I I.E.P. reviews) or for movement to a less restrictive placement (19.8 percent of triennials and 16.3 percent of Phase I I.E.P. reviews). In contrast, only 3.3 percent of triennials resulted in recommendations for movement to a more restrictive environment as opposed to 23 percent of Phase I I.E.P. reviews.

Using the frequency of each type of recommended transfer as the baseline,

Table 16

Number and Percentage of Cases Reviewed,
by Type of Evaluation and Recommended Transfer

Type of Evaluation	Recommended Transfer: To More Restrictive Environment	Remain At Same Level	To Less Restrictive Environment	Decertification	Total
Review of the Phase I I.E.P.	41 (23.0) (91.1)	70 (39.3) (52.2)	29 (16.3) (54.7)	38 (21.3) (56.7)	178 (100.0)[a] (59.5)[b]
Triennial Reevaluation	4 (3.3) (8.9)	64 (52.9) (47.8)	24 (19.8) (45.3)	29 (24.0) (43.3)	121 (100.0)[a] (40.5)[b]
Total	45 (15.1) (100.0)	134 (44.8) (100.0)	53 (17.7) (100.0)	67 (22.4) (100.0)	299 (100.0)[a] (100.0)[b]

[a]Row percentages.

[b]Column percentages.

- The most frequent outcome of both Phase I I.E.P. reviews and triennials was a recommendation for the student to remain at the same level of restrictiveness.
- With the exception of recommendations for transfer to a more restrictive environment, other types of transfers were equally likely to have been recommended by triennial as by Phase I I.E.P. review.

in order to determine the likelihood that a given transfer resulted from a Phase I I.E.P. review as opposed to a triennial, a similar pattern emerges. Recommendation to stay at the same level, to move to a less restrictive setting, or to return to regular grades were equally likely to have come about through Phase I I.E.P. reviews as triennials. However, recommendations for placement in a more restrictive setting were about nine times more likely to have been made through Phase I I.E.P. review (91.1 percent) than triennial (8.9 percent). Presumably, this reflects a greater sense of urgency in the situations leading up to a recommendation for a more restrictive placement.

Parent Involvement and Recommended Transfer

To determine whether there was any relationship between parent attendance at planning conferences and outcome, the number and percentage of parents who were present for at least one conference in connection with the case review were tabulated by type of recommendation; these data were available for 270 cases. The results, which are presented in Table 17, indicated that parents of 189, or 70 percent, of the children whose cases were reviewed attended at least one conference. Proportions of parents attending a conference by type of recommended transfer were as follows: to regular grades, 31 out of 47, or 66 percent; to less restrictive setting, 39 out of 50, or 78 percent; remaining at the same level, 88 out of 130, or 68 percent; to more restrictive setting, 31 out of 43, or 72 percent. While these data were not suitable for inferential statistical analysis, it did not appear that there were substantial differences in parent involvement for different types of student transfer.

Table 17

Number and Percentage of Parents who Attended at Least One Conference, by Type of Recommended Transfer

Transfer	N[a]	Number[b]	(Percent)
More Restrictive Environment			
From Self-contained to Special School	8	4	(50.0)
From Resource Room to Self-contained	35	27	(77.1)
Total	43	31	(72.1)
Remain at Same Level			
From Special School to Special School	6	3	(50.0)
From Self-contained to Self-contained	105	69	(65.7)
From Resource Room to Resource Room	19	16	(84.2)
Total	130	88	(67.7)
Less Restrictive Environment			
From Special School to Self-contained	5	3	(60.0)
From Special School to Resource Room	1	1	(100.0)
From Self-contained to Resource Room	44	35	(79.5)
Total	50	39	(78.0)
Decertification			
From Self-contained to Regular Grade	13	12	(92.3)
From Resource Room to Regular Grade	34	19	(55.9)
Total	47	31	(66.0)
Total	270	189	(70.0)

[a]Number of students for whom these data were available.

[b]Number of students whose parents attended at least one conference.

- In all, parents of 70 percent of the students whose cases were reviewed attended at least one S.B.S.T. or C.O.H. conference.

Student Ability, Academic Achievement, and Recommended Transfer

Finally, to determine the relationship between student ability and level of functioning and type of transfer, students' I.Q.s and number of years behind in reading and mathematics were tabulated according to the type of transfer. Number of years below grade level in reading and mathematics were estimated by comparing grade-equivalent reading and mathematics scores for each student with his or her grade level based on age. It must be noted that all of these data are only estimates of ability and level of functioning; in most cases, there were no indications of the date at which the test scores were obtained, and, in some cases, numerical scores were estimated from data such as "Student is reading on grade level" or "dull normal I.Q."

Despite such limitations, descriptive statistical analyses of these data, which are presented in Table 18, revealed some noteworthy patterns. The data suggest that recommendation for placement at a certain level of restrictiveness, whether or not there was a change in level and regardless of the size or direction of the change, was associated with student ability and achievement.

For example, the 49 students from resource rooms and self-contained classes who were recommended for decertification had I.Q.s in the normal range ($\underline{M}$ = 97.8; $\underline{S.D.}$ = 8.4) and were close to grade level in both reading ($\underline{M}$ = 0.4 years below grade; $\underline{S.D.}$ = 1.9) and math ($\underline{M}$ = 0.9 years below grade; $\underline{S.D.}$ = 2.0). The 60 students recommended for resource-room placement also had I.Q.s within the normal range ($\underline{M}$ = 93.6; $\underline{S.D.}$ = 9.9), but their academic achievement was a year or more below grade level; average number of years behind in reading was 2.0 ($\underline{S.D.}$ = 2.1) and in math 2.4 ($\underline{S.D.}$ = 1.9). In contrast, the 136 students recommended for continued placement or transfer

Table 18

Mean I.Q. and Number of Years Below Grade Level
in Reading and Mathematics for Each Type of Recommended Transfer

Transfer	N	I.Q. Mean	I.Q. (S.D.)	Years Behind in Reading Mean	Years Behind in Reading (S.D.)	Years Behind in Math Mean	Years Behind in Math (S.D.)
To Special School Program							
From Special School	5	54.7	(11.8)	5.2	(2.0)	5.2	(1.4)
From Self-contained	8	76.9	(20.5)	3.9	(2.7)	3.2	(2.3)
Total	13	71.1	(19.8)	4.4	(2.4)	4.0	(2.1)
To Self-Contained Class							
From Self-contained	96	77.1	(16.1)	3.8	(2.0)	3.5	(1.9)
From Special School	6	82.3	(17.9)	2.3	(2.3)	2.7	(1.1)
From Resource Room	34	84.1	(10.7)	3.5	(1.6)	3.3	(2.0)
Total	136	78.8	(15.4)	3.7	(1.9)	3.4	(1.9)
To Resource Room							
From Resource Room	17	91.6	(10.6)	1.5	(2.2)	1.0	(1.5)
From Self-contained	43	94.8	(9.7)	2.1	(2.1)	2.6	(1.8)
Total	60	93.6	(9.9)	2.0	(2.1)	2.4	(1.9)
To Regular Grades							
From Self-contained	10	96.8	(4.8)	0.4	(2.9)	0.3	(3.2)
From Resource Room	39	98.1	(9.3)	0.4	(1.6)	1.0	(1.5)
Total	49	97.8	(8.4)	0.4	(1.9)	0.9	(2.0)
Total[a]	258	85.6	(16.0)	2.7	(2.5)	2.7	(2.2)

[a]Total number of students for whom these data were available.

- Students recommended for decertification had I.Q.s in the normal range and were close to grade level in reading and math. Students recommended for resource room placement also had I.Q.s in the normal range but were a year or more below grade level in reading and math. Students recommended for self-contained classes or special school programs had I.Q.s in the borderline or retarded range and were several years below grade level in reading and math.

to self-contained classes had a mean I.Q. score of 78.8 (S.D. = 15.4), and were an average of 3.7 years behind in reading (S.D. = 1.9) and 3.4 years behind in math (S.D. = 1.9). Finally, the 13 students recommended for special school programs had I.Q.s in the borderline retarded range (M = 71.1; S.D. = 19.8) and reading and math scores an average of about four years below grade level ($M_{reading}$ = 4.4; S.D. = 2.4 and M_{math} = 4.0; S.D. = 2.1).

To summarize, on the basis of the information available on the intellectual ability and academic functioning of these students, it appeared that appropriate recommendations for transfers resulted from their triennial re-evaluations or reviews of the Phase I I.E.P. Among the questions which remain for further investigation is this: To what extent are students remaining in special education programs who show similar profiles to those being moved to less restrictive settings or decertified?

VI. INTERVIEWS OF S.B.S.T., C.O.H., AND SCHOOL STAFF

Interviews in Spring, 1983 with S.B.S.T., C.O.H., and school personnel in four districts provided further information on L.R.E. movement and de-certification of special education students. Staff interviewed included 25 special education teachers, 20 school principals, 10 special education supervisors, the four C.O.H. chairpersons, and members of 20 S.B.S.T.s.

In this chapter, data from staff interviews and C.O.H. records are presented which address the following topics:

- the incidence of Phase I I.E.P. reviews and triennial reevaluations;
- initiation of, and participation in, the review process;
- criteria for making a referral for review of the Phase I I.E.P. or for recommending a transfer to a less restrictive setting;
- the components of an assessment for review of the Phase I I.E.P.;
- provisions for mainstreaming; and
- staff perceptions of factors affecting L.R.E. movement.

Incidence of Referrals for Review of the Phase I I.E.P.

There was marked variation among the districts and among the teams in the number of referrals received for review of the Phase I I.E.P., as well as in the number of triennials that were completed. Among the four districts visited, the overall number of referrals for review of the Phase I I.E.P. ranged from 342 to 1,290 for the school year. The wide range in number of referrals was also evident from the interviews with school personnel. Over

half the teachers interviewed had referred three or fewer students for Phase I I.E.P. review between September and May, as had about one-third of the principals; most of the others reported referring from six to 10 students each, and two principals referred as many as 30. Similarly, about half the special education supervisors had received 10 or fewer referrals, with the others reporting up to 35.

Almost all respondents reported that the large majority of requests for review of the Phase I I.E.P. were initiated by classroom teachers, often in collaboration with the special education supervisor or principal. The next most frequent initiators of requests for review of the Phase I I.E.P. were parents, followed by principals, supervisors, and other school personnel.

Parents were reportedly quite involved in the review process; 15 of the 20 teams estimated that parents of at least 80 percent of the students attended the educational planning conference (E.P.C.). Whether or not they attended the E.P.C., they were almost always in agreement with S.B.S.T. recommendations for movement to a less restrictive setting or decertification; 18 of the 20 S.B.S.T.s and three of the four C.O.H. chairpersons reported parent agreement rates of more than 90 percent.

According to team members, the number of triennials completed as of April 30, 1982 ranged from "a few" to "about 100", and the number remaining to be completed ranged from "none" to "about 200"; three-fourths of the teams had completed between 10 and 60. A number of the S.B.S.T.s expected that any remaining triennials would be completed during the summer.

Teachers' Criteria for Referral for Less Restrictive Placement

Special education teachers' criteria for referring a student for review

of the Phase I I.E.P., with a view toward less restrictive placement, included both academic and behavioral improvement; however, many of their statements were quite general. Responses included: "good academic performance," "not far below grade level," "shows responsibility," and "interacts well with peers." For most teachers academic criteria were most important; students' behavioral and emotional functioning were considered, but without sufficient academic improvement were not enough to support a referral for a less restrictive placement.

S.B.S.T. Criteria for Transfer or Decertification

S.B.S.T. criteria for recommending transfer from a self-contained class to a resource room also included academic and behavioral improvement, and, in addition, many teams looked for indications that the student was capable of functioning in the regular education mainstream most of the day. Comments showed a range of standards, particularly in academic functioning. Some teams and C.O.H. chairpersons required students to be near grade level as defined by standardized tests; others that they function at the level of the rest of the school, not necessarily at grade level; and others required improvement to within "one or two years below grade." The teams indicated that they relied on teacher reports and recommendations as well as their own assessments.

Criteria for decertification also varied among districts and teams with some teams and C.O.H. chairpersons requiring that students have standardized reading and math scores at or above grade level, others requiring that students, in addition, receive passing grades in subject areas, and others

looking for generalized improvement. Again, teams relied on information from a variety of sources including teacher and parent reports, and, in particular, indications of successful mainstreaming for periods of up to several months.

Components of the Phase I I.E.P. Review

Over three-fourths of the teams interviewed indicated that they did not administer a full battery of tests when reviewing the Phase I I.E.P. Team members considered the following when planning a review: length of time since the last evaluation; availability of ancillary information such as observations and teacher and parent reports; and the nature of the referral issue, i.e., the more circumscribed the referral question, the more focussed the assessment. Most of the responses indicated that the teams considered the purpose of the review to bring information up-to-date rather than to carry out a new assessment.

Provisions for Mainstreaming

Provisions for mainstreaming, or the inclusion of special education students in activities with regular eduation students, also varied among the schools and districts visited and also among different disability groups. According to interviews with special education teachers, principals, and S.B.S.T. members, the most prevalent mainstreaming activities were non-academic. All or nearly all special education students participated in lunch and assembly with regular education students. The next most frequently mentioned activity was gym; about half of the respondents in each category indicated that special education and regular education students attended gym

classes together. Art and music classes and trips were mentioned next most frequently.

Mainstreaming in academic subjects occurred least frequently and also showed the most variation among schools and disability groups. In one district, only one S.B.S.T. team and one teacher indicated that academic mainstreaming occurred in their schools; none of the principals from that district did so. In another district, about half of those interviewed mentioned academic mainstreaming, and in two districts, most or all respondents in each category did so.

After resource room students, who were mainstreamed in all areas other than the resource room subjects, learning-disabled students in Health conservation 30 (H.C. 30) classes were those most frequently mainstreamed in the four districts visited. Students from classes for the emotionally handicapped, neurologically impaired and emotionally handicapped, or mentally retarded were mainstreamed about as often as H.C. 30 students in all areas except academic subjects; few, if any, students in these categories received academic mainstreaming.

Responses of special education teachers, supervisors, principals, and S.B.S.T. members indicated that in about three-fourths of the schools visited, there were informal mainstreaming arrangements, use of which ranged from occasional to extensive. Such arrangments included the following: trial mainstreaming of a student prior to a referral for review of the Phase I I.E.P.; extension of mainstreaming beyond that already specified in the I.E.P.; mainstreaming placements negotiated through the principal, assistant principal, or informal teacher network; and special activities or

projects such as athletic competitions or Scout troops made up of regular and special education students.

Perceptions of Factors Affecting L.R.E. Movement

Staff responses revealed a wide range of interdependent factors which were seen as affecting transfers of special education students to less restrictive settings. Most respondents directed their answers to mainstreaming and decertification and the influences on these. To facilitate presentation, the findings are organized around four issues: the educational context in which transfers occur, the role of the immediate participants in the transfer, the availability of related and support services, and the importance of mainstreaming.

Perhaps it is best to begin with a remark made by one staff member, whose point of view was echoed by many others:

> "Most important is that the general attitude of all parties involved be that movement to less restrictive environments is the goal of special education, rather than that special education is an end in itself."

Context. One factor which emerged clearly from the responses was the importance of overall educational context, especially at the school level. Positive administrative attitudes toward special education and L.R.E. movement, as well as a variety of related policies were seen as encouraging transfers. For example, respondents felt that any activity which promoted contact between regular and special education students and faculty contributed to a supportive climate. Another organizational influence cited was the importance of having an established administrative procedure and a specific person or group with responsibility for making arrangements for mainstreaming. In some cases, school policy was described as inhibiting L.R.E. movement as, for example, restricting mainstreaming to students above grade four or

excluding students from classes for emotionally handicapped.

One contextual element which was always mentioned in negative terms was the size of the class registers in regular education, reportedly as high as 46 students in some cases, which made it difficult to include additional students, particularly students requiring special attention.

District level factors were also mentioned. In two districts, for example, C.O.H. practices were perceived as promoting L.R.E. movement; one C.O.H. required review of the Phase I I.E.P.s of all resource room students who tested on grade level, and another required that triennials for graduating students be done early in the year to ensure optimal preparation for placement at the next school. On the other hand, such practices could also have a negative impact on L.R.E. movement. For example, it was reported that in one district, students were expected to function on grade level in order to be mainstreamed in academic subjects, a requirement that was seen as too rigid.

Respondents suggested that more specific guidelines for transfers, as well as for initial placements, more frequently mandated reviews of special education placements, a single district supervisor for both regular and special education, and more autonomy at the district and school levels could all help foster L.R.E. movement.

Participants. The principal participants in L.R.E. movement, and, in particular, mainstreaming were, in addition to the student and his or her parents, the special education and regular education teachers, and the S.B.S.T. team. Of these five, only the special education teachers and S.B.S.T. members were interviewed.

With respect to students and parents a number of issues emerged.

Besides sufficient improvement in a student's social, academic, and behavioral functioning to warrant an L.R.E. transfer, respondents also saw student, as well as parent, motivation as important. A number cited reasons which might interfere with a positive attitude toward such a transfer; instead of being seen as a gain, mainstreaming and, especially decertification, were reportedly viewed by many students and parents as representing a substantial loss -- a loss of related services, a loss of individualized instruction, and a feared loss of the academic gains made in special education. However, according to respondents a positive attitude could be fostered by the following: ongoing parent contact, not just when there are problems; more effective parent education on the goals of special education; and ways to help students at home.

The role of the special education teacher and the special education setting were seen as crucial. Chief among their influences was providing effective instruction to help students overcome the deficits that led to their placement in special education, a task which could be fostered, according to a number of respondents, by an academically rigorous special education curriculum, sufficient input from special education supervisors, and interaction among special education classes in order to maximize teaching strengths. One example of the latter was a departmentalized reading program within an H.C. 30 unit consisting of several classes which reportedly gave the students a "feeling of movement, of doing better" and contributed to motivation for being mainstreamed.

Ironically, some of the same factors that were seen as important for effective special education instruction were seen as having an inhibiting

effect on movement within or out of special education. For example, some respondents stated that special education teachers must foster independence and self-reliance to offset their students' becoming overly dependent on the small-group setting, individualized instruction, and one-to-one attention. As one respondent put it: "Perhaps making a resource room so enjoyable hinders them." Finally, a number of respondents felt that it was important for special education teachers to avoid being "overprotective and overpossessive" or to feel that in effecting transfers to less restrictive settings they were "losing their best kids." Finally, a few respondents remarked on the lack of attention paid to the philosophy of and guidelines for L.R.E. movement in university training of special education teachers and suggested supplementary in-service workshops.

The contributions of regular education teachers were also seen as critical for L.R.E. transfers. Besides being receptive to having additional students in their sometimes already over-crowded classroom, respondents felt that teachers must also be aware, tolerant, and most important, able to meet the special needs of the mainstreamed or decertified students. Many respondents acknowledged the additional demands of mainstreaming on regular education teachers; suggestions for ways to counteract this included incentives such as release time or reduced class size. Suggestions were also made for in-service training to provide regular education teachers with the knowledge and skills to deal effectively with mainstreamed special education students. A few respondents suggested that a common curriculum for regular and special education, particularly in reading and mathematics, would facilitate mainstreaming.

The role of the S.B.S.T.s was also seen as critical. A number of factors were mentioned which were seen as fostering S.B.S.T. effectiveness, including team stability and manageable caseload; both of these were described as promoting better understanding of students' needs, more thorough and professional evaluations, and more effective relationships with regular and special education staff. In addition, prompt completion of Phase I I.E.P. reviews and triennials was seen as important for students' motivation. Many respondents characterized the teams as overworked and consequently unable to perform as well as they might. Suggestions for expediting evaluations included assigning teams to only one school and providing clerical support. Finally, many respondents stressed the necessity of ongoing communication, positive interactions, and a sense of teamwork among all the participants.

Related and support services. Respondents saw the availability of several types of special service as influencing transfers, both in promoting requests for reevaluations and in increasing the likelihood of success once a transfer was made. Services mentioned most often were either related services for students in special education or support services for students in regular education and included: counseling, guidance, speech, remedial programs, tutoring, vocational training, and the availability of a time-out teacher for disruptive students. Respondents reported that the extent to which such services were readily available influenced how likely they were to make a referral or a recommendation for a less restrictive placement, particularly for a student whose needs could be adequately met with some additional service but who did not require the full level of service of his or her current placement on a day-to-day basis. Where such services were

not available, respondents felt that a L.R.E. transfer or decertification was often not in a student's best interest. As one respondent noted: "Once they're decertified, there's nothing left to offer them."

Transition services for students being transferred were also seen as important, especially for making it more likely that a transfer would be successful. Some respondents suggested that there be more widespread training of students prior to decertification in socialization and study skills.

Mainstreaming. Many respondents remarked on the importance of both academic and non-academic mainstreaming within an overall philosophy of special education service provided in the least restrictive setting. Most comments referred to mainstreaming as a bridge to decertification and as part of a process of gradual return to regular education. By providing a "preview" of a student's functioning after decertification, it was seen as helping reduce the incidence of inappropriate or premature decertification. Mainstreaming was also described as motivating students for decertification if efforts were made to ensure that the mainstreaming experience was a positive one.

Other respondents noted the role of mainstreaming for all special education students, including those who might not be expected to return to regular grades. As one person said: "Simply in terms of life experience it's important. They need to learn to operate in large groups with brighter kids."

Related Findings

One of the themes from the staff interviews was that L.R.E. movement

requires ongoing appraisal of the suitability of students' special education placements, and, where appropriate, the willingness and means to effect a transfer; procedurally, the first step is the referral for review of the Phase I I.E.P. Although such a review may have many possible outcomes, including a transfer to a less restrictive setting, nonetheless the number of referrals gives some indication of the degree to which school personnel are directing their attention to the possibilities for students moving within or out of special education, as well as to the continued appropriateness of other services.

According to the data presented in Chapter III there was a 33 percent increase in the number of referrals for review of the Phase I I.E.P. from 1981-82 to 1982-83; the number of requests for initial assessments declined somewhat during the same period. While no definite conclusions may be drawn, it appears that there is already a trend toward better monitoring of the continued suitability of special education placements and services and, perhaps, toward an increase in appropriate L.R.E. transfers and decertifications.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1981-82 and 1982-83, the S.B.S.T.s provided a wide range of services, including, but not limited to, carrying out formal assessments of students referred for possible special education placement and reevaluating or reviewing the placements and services of students already in special education.

Program Objective

For both program cycles, the objective was that, by June 30, 100 percent of the students referred to S.B.S.T.s would receive appropriate and timely evaluation for possible special education placement. Timely evaluation was defined as occurring within 30 days.

Findings indicated that there was marked improvement in the 1982-83 cycle in the proportion of formal assessments that were completed within the 30-day limit. Average proportion in 1981-82 was 66 percent and for 1982-83 it was 94.7 percent. Improvement was most striking in the assessment of elementary, intermediate, and junior high school students; average proportion of cases in compliance increased from 63.9 to 94.3 percent. Compliance was already relatively high in 1981-82 for assessment of the secondary and Citywide Services students served by the regional S.B.S.T.s; average proportion of cases in compliance increased from 82.7 to 97.6 percent.

Several factors may have contributed to the improvement in compliance including: an increase in the number of teams from 441 to 525, program and tax-levy funds for additional per-session hours in 1982-83; and finally, a shift in the composition of the caseload of formal assessments away from initial assessments and toward Phase I I.E.P. reviews, which, according to

interviews with staff, did not usually require a full battery of tests to complete.

L.R.E. Movement and Decertifications

Examination of student transfer and discharge statistics from the D.S.E. Databank files showed that from January 31, 1982 to January 31, 1983 less than two percent of the students from community school-based special education programs returned to regular grades without special education related services, and about two percent of the students from more restrictive settings transferred to resource rooms or speech centers. Among students attending school-based programs, i.e., excluding short-term home instruction and hospital programs, the most likely to be decertified were students receiving itinerant speech or generic resource room services; about eight percent of the former and three percent of the latter returned to regular grades. About 3.5 percent of students from self-contained classes for emotionally handicapped students were transferred to resource rooms or speech centers, as were 2.1 percent of learning disabled students. Students from some of the Citywide Services programs for students with severe behavior, communication, or emotional disorders were transferred to self-contained classes in community schools at the following rates: Day School, 7.4 percent; Teacher-Moms, 7.1 percent; Day Treatment, 4.5 percent; and Track IV, 3.7 percent.

Substantial variability in decertification and L.R.E. movement was observed among districts as well as among special education programs. Analyses of district data for a number of high-incidence programs indicated that overall rates of decertification from these programs ranged from 0.5 to 5.7 percent and rates of transfer to generic resource rooms from self-

contained classes ranged from 0.3 to 3.8 percent.

The findings of this study suggest that some of the variability in district L.R.E. and decertification rates may be explained by differences in overall district achievement levels. Results of multiple regression analyses indicated that the proportion of students reading at or above grade level significantly increased the percentage of explained variance beyond that already explained by the size of special education enrollment; this was true for transfers to resource room as well as decertifications.

Individual Student Characteristics

Analyses of the records of a sample of 300 students whose placements and services had been reviewed showed that recommendations to remain at the same level or to move to a less restrictive setting were about equally likely to have come about through a mandated reevaluation as through a requested review of the Phase I I.E.P. In contrast, recommendations for transfer to a more restrictive placement were about nine times more likely to have come from a specifically requested review than from a mandated triennial, presumably reflecting the greater perceived urgency of the situation.

Parents of 70 percent of the students whose cases were reviewed attended at least one planning conference; parent involvement did not appear to be associated with type of recommended transfer.

Analyses of the intellectual ability and academic achievement levels of these students suggested that in making recommendations for placement or continuation in a particular program, a fairly consistent set of criteria were being employed, regardless of the direction of the recommended transfer. Specifically, students recommended for decertification had I.Q.s in the

normal range and were close to grade level in reading and math; students recommended for resource room placement also had I.Q.s in the normal range but were one to three years below grade level in reading and math; and students recommended for self-contained classes or special school programs had I.Q.s in the borderline or retarded range and were two to five years below grade level.

It must be pointed out again that the sample was not necessarily representative and in many cases the ratings of intellectual or academic level were estimates. Nonetheless there appeared to be considerable uniformity in the characteristics of students placed at similar levels of restrictiveness, suggesting the informal used of de facto placement criteria.

S.B.S.T., C.O.H., and School Staff Interviews

Finally, interviews with S.B.S.T., C.O.H., and school personnel indicated that there was substantial variability among districts and schools in the number of referrals for Phase I I.E.P. review, criteria for referrals and for recommended transfers, and provisions and guidelines for mainstreaming.

Respondents also indicated a wide range of interdependent factors which they perceived as affecting L.R.E. movement and decertification including: district practice; school climate; teacher skills and training; teacher, parent, and student attitudes; and availability of support services in regular education.

Recommendations

In contrast to the compliance statistics, which in 1982-83 were uniformly high for all districts and regions, most of the data which have been presented indicated that once students were placed in special education there was substantial variability in the likelihood of their being transferred to a

less restrictive special education setting, receiving mainstream instruction, and being decertified and returned to regular grades. Variability was observed among districts, schools, and staff in the way in which reviews of the Phase I I.E.P. were initiated and performed and, to a lesser extent, in the criteria for transfer or discharge. The extent of mainstreaming, particularly academic mainstreaming, also varied widely, affected by practical as well as philosophical and attitudinal considerations. It is recommended, therefore, that D.S.E., in conjunction with regional and district administrators, explore possibilities for better dissemination and, where necessary, strengthening or establishing uniform guidelines for the following:

- procedures for initiating and performing Phase I I.E.P. reviews;
- criteria for transfers within and outside of special education; and
- provisions and criteria for mainstreaming, in both academic and non-academic areas.

Finally, it is recommended that awareness training designed to promote and facilitate L.R.E. movement and decertifications be provided to all regular and special education staff and to special education students and their parents.

APPENDIX

Number and Percentage of Itinerant Speech Services
Students Decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983,
by Community School District

District	N[a]	Number of Students	(Percent[b])
1	14	1	(7.1)
2	145	4	(2.8)
3	29	1	(3.5)
4	27	2	(7.4)
5	30	0	(0.0)
6	54	0	(0.0)
7	17	0	(0.0)
8	9	0	(0.0)
9	7	0	(0.0)
10	194	5	(2.6)
11	110	9	(8.2)
12	27	0	(0.0)
13	32	3	(9.4)
14	36	0	(0.0)
15	68	2	(2.9)
16	17	0	(0.0)
17	77	7	(9.1)
18	140	26	(18.6)
19	65	4	(6.2)
20	214	8	(3.7)
21	59	8	(13.6)
22	267	28	(10.5)
23	14	1	(7.1)
24	112	10	(8.9)
25	169	3	(1.8)
26	113	3	(2.7)
27	120	0	(0.0)
28	164	1	(0.6)
29	124	2	(1.6)
30	33	0	(0.0)
31	280	93	(33.2)
32	0	0	(0.0)
Total	2,767	221	(8.0)

[a]Itinerant speech services enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Percentage of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

Number and Percentage of Resource Room Students
Decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983,
by Community School District

District	N[a]	Number of Students (Percent[b])	
1	664	11	(1.7)
2	882	45	(5.1)
3	630	13	(2.1)
4	558	17	(3.1)
5	320	14	(4.4)
6	338	10	(3.0)
7	460	4	(0.9)
8	744	10	(1.3)
9	384	7	(1.8)
10	848	8	(0.9)
11	865	17	(2.0)
12	338	7	(2.1)
13	522	6	(1.2)
14	419	13	(3.1)
15	914	8	(0.9)
16	416	1	(0.2)
17	477	9	(1.9)
18	638	18	(2.8)
19	693	13	(1.9)
20	859	22	(2.6)
21	790	6	(0.8)
22	1,052	22	(2.1)
23	416	3	(0.7)
24	1,009	49	(4.9)
25	1,047	62	(5.9)
26	944	65	(6.9)
27	1,138	31	(2.7)
28	838	32	(3.8)
29	867	81	(9.3)
30	640	27	(4.2)
31	1,841	95	(5.2)
32	352	7	(2.0)
Total	22,903	733	(3.2)

[a]Resource room enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Percentage of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

Number and Percentage of Students from H.C. 30 Classes for Learning Disabled Students Transferred to Resource Rooms and Decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983, by Community School District

District	N[a]	Transferred to Resource Room		Decertified		Total	
		Number	(Percent[b])	Number	(Percent[b])	Number	(Percent[b])
1	464	11	(2.4)	1	(0.2)	12	(2.6)
2	520	11	(2.1)	1	(0.2)	12	(2.3)
3	557	9	(1.6)	5	(0.9)	14	(2.5)
4	508	8	(1.6)	1	(0.2)	9	(1.8)
5	440	6	(1.4)	0	(0.0)	6	(1.4)
6	283	6	(2.1)	1	(0.4)	7	(2.5)
7	596	8	(1.3)	1	(0.2)	9	(1.5)
8	792	16	(2.0)	1	(0.1)	17	(2.1)
9	804	1	(0.1)	2	(0.3)	3	(0.4)
10	647	12	(1.9)	1	(0.2)	13	(2.1)
11	821	16	(2.0)	1	(0.1)	17	(2.1)
12	680	8	(1.2)	1	(0.2)	9	(1.4)
13	548	6	(1.1)	2	(0.4)	8	(1.5)
14	510	6	(1.2)	4	(0.8)	10	(2.0)
15	710	6	(0.9)	0	(0.0)	6	(0.9)
16	539	9	(1.7)	3	(0.6)	12	(2.3)
17	450	6	(1.3)	1	(0.2)	7	(1.5)
18	433	14	(3.2)	2	(0.5)	16	(3.7)
19	749	20	(2.7)	2	(0.3)	22	(3.0)
20	661	19	(2.9)	4	(0.6)	23	(3.5)
21	710	17	(2.4)	2	(0.3)	19	(2.7)
22	727	14	(1.9)	1	(0.1)	15	(2.0)
23	490	2	(0.4)	0	(0.0)	2	(0.4)
24	469	9	(1.9)	3	(0.6)	12	(2.5)
25	679	20	(3.0)	2	(0.3)	22	(3.3)
26	540	18	(3.3)	1	(0.2)	19	(3.5)
27	701	10	(1.4)	2	(0.3)	12	(1.7)
28	580	9	(1.6)	2	(0.3)	11	(1.9)
29	509	19	(3.7)	5	(1.0)	14	(4.7)
30	547	9	(1.7)	3	(0.6)	12	(2.3)
31	935	42	(4.5)	5	(0.5)	47	(5.0)
32	457	8	(1.8)	5	(1.1)	13	(2.9)
Total	19,256	375	(2.0)	65	(0.3)	440	(2.3)

[a]H.C. 30 program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Percentage of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

Number and Percentage of Students from Classes for Emotionally Handicapped Transferred to Resource Rooms and Decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983, by Community School District

District	N[a]	Transferred to Resource Room		Decertified		Total	
		Number	(Percent[b])	Number	(Percent[b])	Number	(Percent[b])
1	225	13	(5.8)	0	(0.0)	13	(5.8)
2	188	5	(2.7)	0	(0.0)	5	(2.7)
3	175	7	(4.0)	3	(1.7)	10	(5.7)
4	150	1	(0.7)	5	(3.3)	6	(4.0)
5	155	3	(1.9)	1	(0.7)	4	(2.6)
6	92	3	(3.3)	0	(0.0)	3	(3.3)
7	205	2	(1.0)	1	(0.5)	3	(1.5)
8	229	4	(1.8)	1	(0.4)	5	(2.2)
9	190	3	(1.6)	1	(0.5)	4	(2.1)
10	126	5	(4.0)	1	(0.8)	6	(4.8)
11	244	6	(2.5)	3	(1.2)	9	(3.7)
12	237	4	(1.7)	0	(0.0)	4	(1.7)
13	307	6	(2.0)	4	(1.3)	10	(3.3)
14	202	5	(2.5)	3	(1.5)	8	(4.0)
15	282	9	(3.2)	0	(0.0)	9	(3.2)
16	150		(2.7)	2	(1.3)	6	(4.0)
17	240	1	(4.6)	8	(3.3)	19	(7.9)
18	255	15	(5.9)	5	(2.0)	20	(7.9)
19	339	12	(3.5)	4	(1.2)	16	(4.7)
20	245	15	(6.1)	3	(1.2)	18	(7.3)
21	469	21	(4.5)	6	(1.3)	27	(5.8)
22	337	22	(6.5)	1	(0.3)	23	(6.8)
23	149	0	(0.0)	4	(2.7)	4	(2.7)
24	149	6	(4.0)	3	(2.0)	9	(6.0)
25	284	14	(4.4)	5	(1.8)	19	(6.2)
26	240	7	(2.9)	1	(0.4)	8	(3.3)
27	361	20	(5.5)	8	(2.2)	28	(7.7)
28	252	11	(4.4)	4	(1.6)	15	(6.0)
29	185	7	(3.8)	8	(4.3)	15	(8.1)
30	230	16	(7.0)	3	(1.3)	19	(8.3)
31	227	5	(2.2)	3	(1.3)	8	(3.5)
32	243	9	(3.7)	4	(1.7)	13	(5.4)
Total	7,362	271	(3.7)	95	(1.3)	366	(5.0)

[a]C.E.H. program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Percentage of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

Number and Percentage of Students Transferred from Classes for Neurologically Impaired and Emotionally Handicapped to Resource Rooms and Decertified between January 31, 1982 and January 31, 1983, by Community School District

District	N[a]	Transferred to Resource Room Number	(Percent[b])	Decertified Number	(Percent[b])	Total Number	(Percent[b])
1	63	1	(1.6)	0	(0.0)	1	(1.6)
2	59	1	(1.7)	0	(0.0)	1	(1.7)
3	107	1	(0.9)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.9)
4	147	5	(3.4)	1	(0.7)	6	(4.1)
5	111	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
6	24	1	(4.2)	0	(0.0)	1	(4.2)
7	137	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
8	160	1	(0.6)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.6)
9	147	1	(0.7)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.7)
10	65	3	(4.6)	0	(0.0)	3	(4.6)
11	139	1	(0.7)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
12	98	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
13	95	1	(1.1)	0	(0.0)	1	(1.1)
14	101	2	(2.0)	1	(1.0)	3	(3.0)
15	108	1	(0.9)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.9)
16	127	1	(0.8)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.8)
17	90	2	(2.2)	0	(0.0)	2	(2.2)
18	77	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
19	174	2	(1.2)	1	(0.6)	3	(1.8)
20	103	1	(1.0)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.0)
21	176	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
22	174	3	(1.7)	1	(0.6)	4	(2.3)
23	109	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
24	91	1	(1.1)	0	(0.0)	1	(1.1)
25	129	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)
26	137	0	(0.0)	1	(0.7)	1	(0.7)
27	261	4	(1.5)	1	(0.4)	5	(1.9)
28	217	3	(1.4)	0	(0.0)	3	(1.4)
29	105	2	(1.9)	1	(1.0)	3	(2.9)
30	126	1	(0.8)	0	(0.0)	1	(0.8)
31	176	4	(2.3)	0	(0.0)	4	(2.3)
32	128	1	(0.8)	2	(1.6)	3	(2.4)
Total	3,961	44	(1.1)	9	(0.2)	53	(1.3)

[a]N.I.E.H. program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.

[b]Percentage of program enrollment as of November 30, 1982.